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Vesco and Castro

ONE IS THE foremost example of Communist revolutionary. The other was a master capitalist; a man so good at manipulating other people's funds that he is charged with embezzling \$224 million. What do these two men — Cuba's Fidel Castro and fugitive financier Robert Vesco — have in common?

For one, Mr. Vesco now lives in Cuba. That was established this week. Mr. Castro told foreign journalists that Mr. Vesco, whose whereabouts have been the source of much speculation since he fled the United States 12 years ago to avoid prosecution, was receiving medical treatment in Havana. Mr. Castro made his revelation in anger only after an NBC television-news crew filmed Mr. Vesco at his Havana home. Previously other Cuban officials had denied that Mr. Vesco lived in Cuba, and Mr. Castro had said that he did not know.

Because Fidel Castro is no fool, his public bravado indicates the level of embarrassment that Mr. Vesco's presence has caused the Cuban government. He accused the CIA of trying to make a public scandal out of this, but he is wrong. Vesco's presence in any country is, and should be, a public scandal.

It's scandalous because, aside from being a fugitive from U.S. justice, Mr. Vesco also is suspected of drug trafficking in the Bahamas and of helping the Cuban government evade the 20-year-old U.S. trade embargo against Cuba.

So Robert Vesco's confirmed presence in Havana is a big embarrassment for Cuba's moralistic revolutionary regime. It should be much more. When Mr. Castro next invites members of Congress to Havana, perhaps they'll ask him why a Communist leader gives sanctuary to a capitalist thief. When Mr. Castro talks about *rapprochement* with the United States, perhaps they'll ask him about Mr. Vesco's alleged drug deals. Better still, perhaps they'll ask the revolutionary why he doesn't extradite the rogue for trial.

Reagan Administration officials previously had said that they had not tried to

Try Extradition

extradite Mr. Vesco because they didn't know his whereabouts. Now they do, so they should request his immediate extradition. Even if Mr. Castro refuses, it should be jolly sport to watch him squirm as he tries to explain why Communist Cuba gives refuge to a capitalist crook.